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No. 449

JONES VERSUS JONES

A MODERN COMEDY
IN ONE ACT

BY
FLORENCE LEWIS SPEARE

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th Street, New York City
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CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

ALICE JONES *Attorney-at-Law*
CARLTON JONES ... *Her Husband, also an Attorney*
MRS. POLLY KEENE *Her Friend*
MARY *A Maid*

JONES VERSUS JONES

The scene takes place in the attractive library of the Joneses one late afternoon in early Spring. The room is most attractive, the sort made cosy by the presence in the house of an efficient, artistic woman. It opens off a hall that runs its full length. The opening into the room is very wide. Soft light tones down all harshness. An open fire adds to its cheerfulness, books and bric-a-brac and a good picture or two give additional touches. A wide, upholstered fire-side seat surrounds the fireplace, which is on the right of the room as you enter. An attractive large picture hangs above it. A mantelpiece juts out over it. Among the trifles seen upon this is a very good likeness of the master of the house. It is framed as a woman who adores her husband does those things—in a hand-carved gold frame. A fine, long reading-table occupies a good bit of space on the left as you enter the room. A reading-lamp; a telephone tucked behind its clever cover; a scattering of choice magazines, a book or two. This table stands well down in the room; on each side of it is placed a comfortable chair. You can tell the gentleman's preference because the chair to the left of the table is more comfortable looking than it is elegant. The companion chair over the other side is the coquettish thing most women like to look comfortable

in. His deep lounging chair is substantial, hers of lighter frame and make. The door leading into his study is in line with his chair—just a trifle farther down the room. Another door, just beside the fireplace, but well back toward the hall, leads into the little room she calls her dressing-room. A soft light falls directly upon the table.

MR. JONES conceives himself to be master in his house even in these days of feminism. But he sometimes has qualms, especially when he reads of the goings-on of "Some of 'em." Politics seems fashionable for women, these days, and so do careers. But MR. JONES has been heard to remark that he could not conceive of such a thing happening in his house—thank goodness, his wife was a pleasant little creature, who did everything which he conceived to be absolutely right. She shrank from publicity, he thanked fortune—was afraid of it: "a domestic woman in these days when they are so hard to discover." So you are to conceive of this husband coming home, blandly happy, wondering what the little woman is doing to make his evening perfect. He lets himself in the house, walks down the hall with the same ceremony with which he always enters it. He is so sure that the newspapers are folded and waiting for him on the library table that he comes suavely down, drawing his gloves off deliberately. Good-naturedly he notices that MARY is just lighting the fire. His wife will enter gracefully, presently, in the firelight. He likes the idea; it frames the domestic scene right.

MR. JONES. (*Complacently*) That's nice, Mary. A little sharpness in the air to-night.

MARY. Yes, soir.

JONES. An open fire adds to a room. I'm a stickler for pleasantness in the house—as you've no doubt noticed, Mary.

MARY. Yes, soir. (*Going.*)

JONES. You can tell Mrs. Jones I am home.

MARY. No, soir. (*He turns a surprised, questioning eye toward her.*) Mrs. Jones is not back, soir.

JONES. Ah! No doubt at her club. But is this Tuesday?

MARY. No, soir.

JONES. (*Takes up paper, opens it*) Then it is a matinée.

MARY. Maybe so, soir. (*Starts again off right and toward the hall. MARY is brought to a sharp pause by an exclamation from Mr. JONES.*)

JONES. Wait! (*He is glaring at newspaper.*) Where is Mrs. Jones?

MARY. She didn't telephone, soir.

JONES. (*Looking like a thunder cloud as he glares at the newspaper*) Eh? What? (*Tosses it down, picks up hat and gloves.*) The instant my wife comes in, tell her I am waiting to speak to her in my study!

MARY. Yes, soir. (*JONES slams into his study. MARY shamelessly tip-toes back and picks up the paper, looks grim.*) So that's what she's come to! (*Smiles grimly.*) My congratulations!

(*MARY is reading along slowly as MRS. JONES very hurriedly enters. She is a radiant woman. There is nothing clinging or bold about her. But she impresses you at first glance as a woman who can do things—and likes to do them. She has a little flash of humor in her voice when she speaks—she is always blithe—and that sort of thing.*)

MRS. JONES. I know I must be late, Mary. (*The*

maid hastily drops the newspaper, and backs off from table.) I suppose Mr. Jones has already come?

MARY. Yes, ma'am. (*Significantly.*) He's in his room, ma'am.

MRS. JONES. Then you hurry with things, Mary. How good your fire seems. (*Crosses to it and in a charming, quick way slips off her furs, takes off her hat, hands it to MARY, and then does things to her hair.*)

MARY. Yes, ma'am. (*She takes the hat and starts away.*) He's in his room, ma'am. (*Her glance is very significant.*)

MRS. JONES. (*Sweetly*) I heard you, Mary. (*But the little woman does not seem at all in a hurry to go to him. She wants him to come and find her here. She knows she is a very attractive figure against the firelight. She carries herself that way; even holds her fingers out to the blaze. JONES has not made his room pleasant for himself, so blazes into the library again. He returns to get that hated newspaper story, but comes face to face with his wife. He stands just outside his own study door and glares at her. She notices no change in his manner. She is actually smiling.*) Oh, there you are, Carlton! I am so glad to see you, dear!

JONES. (*Withering tone*) Don't "dear" me! (*He controls himself.*) I came to have you explain—try to explain—your shameless conduct.

MRS. JONES. (*Bewilderd*) My d——, I don't know what you mean.

JONES. Yes, yes, you do! On my soul, I wonder that you can dare to look at me when you know the light you have put me in!

MRS. JONES. What are you talking about?

JONES. (*Grabbing newspaper, tossing it down*) That infernal rot—that story in the newspapers. Had you forgotten that I still have my newspapers sent home?

MRS. JONES. But I haven't seen to-day's newspaper. Oh, I wonder what you are furious about!

JONES. Will you stand there and tell me you didn't give this story to the reporters—yourself?

MRS. JONES. Let me see what can have happened. *(She goes quickly, picks up paper, smooths it out, glances at it, gives a glad little cry.)* Oh—so that is out already, is it? *(Sits, and reads hungrily, plainly showing her vanity. JONES hovers about, casting withering glances, wheeling back and forth, up and down, restlessly. She has forgotten him, but he brings her back. He sneers openly.)*

JONES. Surprises you—that's very plain. Oh, yes!

MRS. JONES. And pleasantly surprises me, I can tell you.

JONES. *(Violently)* Oh, does it? Well, let me tell you that I am ashamed to go out and meet my friends.

MRS. JONES. *(Deep in her reading, murmurs)* I can't see why.

JONES. *(The injured man snorts)* Eh?

MRS. JONES. *(Lost to his stares)* You ought to be glad. *(Reads aloud.)* "Mrs. Carlton Jones, leader of the Smart Set, has successfully passed the examinations to the Bar and is admitted to plead in the Judicial Courts." *(Mesmerized by the sudden horror that this situation has thrust upon him, JONES hovers in the background, sympathetically smoothing down his own back hair, but she is quite unconscious of this. She is just seeing herself in this new light.)* I'm that woman!

JONES. Pooh!

MRS. JONES. *(Little catch in her voice)* Tell me you are proud of your wife, Carlton!

JONES. Eh? On my soul, I'd give a fortune if I could wipe this thing out. My name dragged into such notoriety! This to come to my house! *(Whips*

suddenly around, faces her sourly.) Wasn't one lawyer in the family enough?

MRS. JONES. Oh, you are hard, dear. Everybody else has been charming.

JONES. (*Squelches her*) No doubt! I forgot them, *the cats!*

MRS. JONES. Do listen to me, Carlton——

JONES. (*Raging about, deeply aggrieved*) Proud of you! And I thought she had strength enough of mind for these female agitators. The papers every day full of the doings of some wife or other who has bolted the traces. God knows who's to pay the fiddler if such things keep on. (*Stops, to watch and see her crumple under the blow he is about to deliver.*) Let me tell you I am a man who can support his wife—and keep her in luxury, too. Your pearls—your own town car——

MRS. JONES. (*Looking at him tenderly*) Yes, I know, dear. You are successful. But it isn't luxuries I want.

JONES. (*Dazed*) Eh?

MRS. JONES. No. It isn't to make more money that I studied so hard—for I admit it was very hard—I wanted to help you. (*The man is so shocked he simply is petrified on the spot. She is making revelations.*) I kept saying to myself, over and over—"You must never fail him at any point in his career. He is to mount steadily upward, and you must be ready to help him, be of service to him at every advance." And so I kept at those great books, so determined was I to make myself a more intelligent companion for my good husband——

JONES. (*Shouts*) Oh, hear her chatter! Intelligent companion! Useful! (*He smiles pityingly on her.*) So you have saddled yourself with work just to keep me from becoming a failure! Of all things! Intelligent companion! (*Snort of wrath.*)

MRS. JONES. Please don't misunderstand me. But there are so many ways I can assist you.

JONES. Do I seem to be tottering? Am I become so old, or dull, that my profession is in peril? (*He wants to frighten her, but she does not wince.*) By George! Let me tell you, madam, when I do require help in the law—I won't call in a—a petticoat! (*Starts striding again—he is pleased at that last blow he gave her.*) I'd take down my shingle before I'd look such a fool——

MRS. JONES. (*Persists*) If you wanted something typed—or looked up—I could care for that.

JONES. *No!* You needn't try to wheedle me round. And I tell you, what's more, it was an under-handed trick you played on me. I knew nothing of your studying *law*.

MRS. JONES. (*Dimples*) You never suspected—and yet I did it right under your nose. I knitted in all the points I had to remember! That work-basket was filled with all sorts of cases! And I unravelled the stocking in the morning to see if I could pick every thread of the argument up!

JONES. (*Stares at her in perplexity. This is the regard she has for the sacred law!*) What a profound misunderstanding of the profession you have!

MRS. JONES. (*Flares up*) You've no right to say that. You can't know!

JONES. Anyone who would treat a sensible subject in such a—an amazing manner could not have a legal opinion that is worth *shucks*. It is a profession, madam—not a thing to stick a darning-needle in. There's the tool for you! The needle! You keep to that. I'll care for fees.

MRS. JONES. Carlton! I'll never forgive you if you won't give me one chance—just one—to show what a success I could be.

JONES. Who cares for “a successful woman”—as a wife? Do you think I want to turn my home into a

shop? Leave the office only to enter here and start fighting legal battles all over again? No, ma'am. I want peace and quiet under my roof. Every husband does—if he isn't afraid to admit it. (*He is gratified to see she remains quiet; it spurs him on.*) I suppose there is nothing that jars a man like having one of those argumentative shrews sitting across at the table—her clapper-tongue running along while she thinks he is drinking in her clear-sighted wisdom. It spoils his evening beside an open fire. Makes him forget even his skill in a game of cards. By George! None of your strong-minded females for me! I can supply all the brains necessary for running my home—and my business!

MRS. JONES. Yes, of course, dear. But why not let me do detail work—like looking up references—or running up to the Court for you, when you could be so much more weightily occupied?

JONES. We have a clever boy or two in the office.

MRS. JONES. Yes, yes! But over and over again as I have watched you in your study fussing and fuming through your papers, I said to myself, "How nice it would be if I only understood enough of the law to enter sanely into his affairs"—for it is very painful to me—as a wife, dear—to watch you sometimes in that room—and you must admit I was clever enough going about it—to be admitted to plead in the courts——

JONES. I am ready to admit anything you like—so long as you drop the matter there and never refer to this subject again. (*Smiles.*) I am prepared even to forget—and forgive, all this newspaper notoriety. And all I shall ask you to remember, my dear, is that we are now back just where we were before all this tomfoolery started. (*JONES goes to his chair, right of table, drops into it, picks up magazines, reads.*)

MRS. JONES. (*Bolt upright with astonishment, gazes fixedly at his bland profile*) Carlton! I've

earned no right for consideration? (*He grunts, buries himself deeper in his reading.*) I'm to sit and flatter myself that—I'm your wife? Accept your comments—without question?

JONES. If it pleases you to express it that way—yes.

MRS. JONES. You amazing man! Here I sit telling you how passionately interested I am in seeing you rise to success. Craving to be launched into the struggle beside you. I've proved my mettle—and you tell me to forget all that I have worked to teach myself—and become again a clinging, trivial, swaddled, chatty thing that only knows enough to sit up at your table and beam on you. But, Carlton—that day is over. It may seem incredible to you to hear it—but I've changed!

JONES. Be good enough to shift back again.

MRS. JONES. I couldn't endure it!

JONES. (*Looking swiftly up*) Haven't I been a good husband to you?

MRS. JONES. Oh, you kept me looking so that your friends could see how successful you were growing. But I'm tired of wearing expensive clothes, playing bridge, and sitting in my chair watching you grow stout. I saw the way of escape and I took it, Carlton. I'll be the proudest woman on earth—if you will accept me—as your clerk.

JONES. I'll say you're a determined woman!

MRS. JONES. (*Smiling on him, wheedles*) Yes? is it—yes?

JONES. (*Roars*) No! And that's final!

MRS. JONES. Is it? (*She rises.*) All right. Listen to me—I shall hang out a shingle of my own!

JONES. Eh? Have you gone utterly, raving mad?

MRS. JONES. Don't shout, dear. It's my right to practice as well as yours. I mean to take it.

JONES. (*Incredulously*) Do you mean——?

MRS. JONES. I shall practice law alone. Yes, Carlton.

JONES. *This—in my house?* By George! You say it—*seriously?*

MRS. JONES. Yes.

JONES. (*Emphatically*) I won't have it! Do you hear?

MRS. JONES. Your reasons?

JONES. Can you ask them? I suppose I want to see my wife trailing in and out of every filthy courtroom in this city and battling with all the sharks that stand up to fight a case.

MRS. JONES. Surely, there are some gentlemen—beside yourself—engaged in the law, Carlton.

JONES. I tell you I won't be laughed at by every friend I've got, saying my wife has to get out and hustle for a living. You hear that?

MRS. JONES. That's not flattering to our set, dear. But you haven't named the real reason, yet. Honestly, have you?

JONES. Eh? What?

MRS. JONES. (*Smiling*) Professional jealousy. I mean *that*!

JONES. Great Scott! (*Jump of rage.*) If you were only a man!

MRS. JONES. (*Villainously gleeful*) I knew you would be the very moment I got my degree. So I intentionally didn't tell you. And then that newspaper handed me over into your hands. Oh, Carlton—I passed the examinations to the Bar—and some of the male candidates didn't!

JONES. Boys, likely!

MRS. JONES. Not a bit of it! But I was—magnificent! (*Gleefully nods.*) I'll show you when I get a chance to triumph in a little legal sparring match.

JONES. (*Controlling himself*) I won't stand for this!

MRS. JONES. (*Shamelessly boastful*) You're afraid I won't win?

JONES. (*Inflated with morality*) Do you think you can play with me——

MRS. JONES. (*Gleefully*) I'll show you!

JONES. You're my wife! (*Violently.*)

MRS. JONES. You mean—that robs me of all individuality?

JONES. Stops you from making a fool of yourself. Your place is *here*.

MRS. JONES. You act as if you were a Turk—and I the favorite wife in your harem.

JONES. (*Bounds out of his chair*) Ye gods! You ought to be ashamed of such words coming out of your mouth. All these years together—and I never found you out! (*Raging back and forth, hands jammed in pockets.*) I remember laughing at other fellows—I thought this could never come into my house—— (*Stands, looks at her tragically.*) Dash it all, Alice, haven't you any sense of decency? Of course you are acting on impulse——

MRS. JONES. (*Unabashed*) No impulse, Carlton. I've been planning to say this to you for years. And I'll stick to my guns—unless you say I am free to go and come in this house—as—a *law clerk*!

JONES. By George, *no!* (*Throws up his hands. She turns from him. His voice and manner soften.*) Don't let us go on in anger, dear. I've lost a grip on myself—and—and I don't want to say anything that either of us will regret later. Of course I know you are a capable little woman. I'm sure there isn't another can hold a candle to you—and I'm proud of your looks—and all that—you'll soon come round again to be the quiet little woman I married. (*She doesn't move or speak. JONES then crosses to his door and stands with his hand on the knob, speaks to her.*) Guess you're right, Alice. Least said, soonest mended. (*Exits.*)

ALICE. (*Listens to the door close—looks toward it*) He is bullying me. That's what he is doing. Well, I won't stand it. (*She stands, reading the newspaper again. Telephone rings. She picks it up.*) Yes? Mrs. Jones speaking. Oh, Mrs. Keene, how sweet of you. Just read it? Thank you so much! What! Am I going to practice? (*Looks at her husband's shut door, laughs.*) Well, you just offer the chance! (*Almost drops receiver.*) You have a case for me? Oh, wait a minute—a minute! (*Sits, draws pad, pencil across.*) All right. What? Your maid left without warning—you withheld wages—now she is suing you. Yes. *I'll take the case.* Suppose you drop in this evening, and I will have everything drawn up for you to glance over. Can you? Good. Yes. Of course I can have it all ready for you. Good-bye. (*Hangs up receiver, gathers up her notes, passes gaily across to her room. Turns on the threshold.*) Now, Mr. Carlton Jones—we shall see!

(*Exits. Closes door. JONES's door opens—he steps out, expecting to encounter his wife. Sighs, drops into chair, shakes his head dejectedly, is pitying himself heartily. Smoking, picks up evening paper—holds it at arm's length. Sighs.*)

JONES. Spoilt my evening for me. (*Sighs, looks fixedly at the story.*) Poor misguided soul!

MARY. (*The maid enters stealthily—stands peering about—cranes her neck toward MRS. JONES's shut door. Sees JONES—gains assurance—comes quietly down, coughs apologetically. JONES pays no attention. She coughs again—speaks mysteriously*) Mr. Jones—soir.

JONES. (*Lifelessly*) Yes, Mary.

MARY. Mr. Jones. I—I was wanting to ask yer opinion on—a—a case.

JONES. (*Whips around*) Good Lord! You studying law, too, Mary?

MARY. (*Jump of alarmed disgust*) No, soir. Divvil a wurrud do I know about it. That's why I cum to you, soir. To advise me.

JONES. Oh, all right, Mary. Fire away.

MARY. Well, soir, could I sue a lady who didn't pay me me back pay?

JONES. (*Warily*) Well, that depends. Who is the woman, Mary?

MARY. (*Brightening*) Mrs. Keene, soir. Mrs. Polly Keene.

JONES. Not *the* Mrs. Polly Keene, Mary? Political ballyhooer—— That general, all-round feminine agitator—eh?

MARY. Yes, soir; the very one, soir. She was sich a nuisance—always havin' them skirmishin' powder-puff, argyfyin' females rushin' in and out of her rooms that I got sick of it—an' I ups and leaves without givin' the usual warnin'—and then, soir, that woman wouldn't pay me me back wages. So I writes her I am havin' the law on her. And now, soir, can I do it?

JONES. (*Enthusiastically*) You leave it to me, Mary. That's a good girl—just leave it to me.

MARY. Yes, soir. Much obliged. I'm parlor girl, soir—when you may be wantin' me. (*Exits.*)

JONES. (*Laughs*) That's perfect! Lord! I'll amuse myself with one of my wife's crew, just to show her how they look when all battered to pieces. (*Chuckles.*) Gad! I'm sorry for poor Mrs. Keene.

MRS. JONES. (*Enters, her arms filled with fat, legal books. Very business-like—hair slightly disheveled—very important legal manner. Her husband is vastly amused. Turns his back squarely on her to burrow deeper in his paper and to grin over the awful blow he is going to deal the unfeminine females.*) Just glance that over, will you? (*Tosses a*

paper across. She sits, opens a big book, flops over the pages, runs her finger down, flops more pages over. JONES darts an amused expression at her—poor soul, it is his last! He fairly bristles with wrath a moment later.)

JONES. (*Beginning calmly*) "Municipal Court of New York—Polly Keene—defendant——" *Great Scott!* (*Swings about.*) Say, where did you pick this up?

MRS. JONES. (*Airily*) My first case. Mrs. Keene called me up and engaged my services.

JONES. (*Loudly*) But she can't—she can't do that.

MRS. JONES. (*Sweetly*) Why not, dear?

JONES. Because this is *my* case!

MRS. JONES. (*Staggered*) What?

JONES. My case!

MRS. JONES. But who engaged your services?

JONES. (*Beaming*) The plaintive—her parlor-maid did.

MRS. JONES. (*Calmly returns to her book*) Oh, that's all right.

JONES. (*Fully restored to good humor*) Naturally! You've got to drop it.

MRS. JONES. (*Unruffled*) Not a bit of it!

JONES. (*Nonplussed*) Say! Do you suppose I am going to fight this case out against you?

MRS. JONES. (*Proudly*) If you take the plaintive's case—you are!

(JONES looks squarely across at his wife. He expects to wither her; but she does not wince.)

JONES. (*After a slight pause*) Well, I'll be—damned!

MRS. JONES. (*Quickly*) Don't be coarse, Carlton. (*With horrid poise.*) Drop your side, if you're scared.

JONES. (*Grips the table firmly, rises, seems almost about to precipitate himself across it.* MRS. JONES *does not shrink at all.*) Go on! Go on, madam! But let's be calm! (*He swallows heavily—she is driving the man to his disadvantage.*) Since my marriage you've been a sane, sound, sensible wife—noted for your beauty, your wit—such a woman as I have been proud to claim. But by the great herring—if you persist in making a fool of yourself, then, madam, there is bound to be trouble. You'll regret it.

MRS. JONES. Do you think you can scare me into dropping this case? And when I married you—well, according to your lights, you've been a good husband to me. You are moral, ambitious—and wonderful! But you know you wouldn't dare bully a brother attorney the way you are bullying me. You must understand, Carlton, that I have the same right to practice—and—*by the great herring, I'm going to!*

JONES. (*Sneers*) You'll make a fine show of yourself, poor woman.

MRS. JONES. I'm not afraid of losing.

JONES. (*Gibes*) Fools rush in——

MRS. JONES. (*Flushes*) Nice professional etiquette, calling me names.

JONES. (*Roars*) So help me—you drop that case!

MRS. JONES. No!

JONES. (*Exasperated, leaps to feet*) Then, madam, here is another case for you.

MRS. JONES. Good. What is it?

JONES. In the divorce courts—Jones Versus Jones. You can come to a decision, madam—as quickly as you like.

MRS. JONES. (*Rising, sweeps up her paper*) Thank you! I will settle that immediately. (*She moves rapidly toward her room, turns at her door, erect and*

spirited.) I shall sleep at mother's to-night. Please send my trunks after me. (*Exits, banging door.*)

JONES. (*Looks as if he would dash in after her—then turns hopelessly away. Stands transfixed a minute, then like a thunder-cloud he makes a dash for his rooms. A traveling case comes flying out, then his boots, and a scattering of collars and clothing. JONES comes whipping out after them, hurdles across the litter, looks about wildly.*) Where the devil is my razor? (*Stirs his things up wildly—looks across at his wife's door, hesitates, rushes at it, bangs loudly on the door.*) Say! (*Knocks smartly.*) You! (*Knocks again.*) Throw out my things—and be quick about it. Won't you answer me? (*Knocks harder.*) Do it! And be quick about it. (*He hears a swish of her skirts and nimbly jumps back to a safe distance. The door is opened and out flies some apparel. Her voice calls bitterly.*)

MRS. JONES. Why didn't you break in the door and strike me?

JONES. You begin to see what you deserve, I notice!

MRS. JONES. *Brute!*

JONES. Eh! Jezebel! What will you say to your mother when you arrive home? Think she is going to receive you in—without comment? (*Packing.*) I suppose you will have all the notoriety you want before this case is over, my lady.

MRS. JONES. (*Cries back*) Keep on! Go on, Carlton.

JONES. Since you want to shine as a business woman, this is your chance. You can settle all the costs—and excuse me from paying alimony—Mrs. Attorney!

MRS. JONES. (*Calls*) Keep your opinions for the court.

JONES. Boo! You'll need to keep yours for some—sister attorney.

MRS. JONES. (*Cries*) That's a compliment to my sex!

JONES. Eh—tabby-cats!

MRS. JONES. Take all the advantage you can! It's your last chance to browbeat me.

JONES. (*Slapping bags together*) *Henpecking*—is your favorite pastime!

(*MRS. JONES comes out carrying a small hand-bag; she has thrown a handsome carriage coat on over her gown. As she sweeps into the room, the bell rings, but MARY going toward the door passes unnoticed. MRS. JONES has gone down majestically toward the fireplace—JONES has glared at her—and bolted into his room. She hears his door slam. Then very quickly she picks up his framed photograph—looks at it—then drops it into her hand-bag. She is glancing about to see what other trinkets she must carry away, when in comes MRS. "DOLLY," as blithe and gay as a spring morning.*)

MRS. KEENE. Alice!

MRS. JONES. (*Murmurs*) Oh—Mrs. Keene.

MRS. KEENE. (*Taking in wrap*) Going out? I won't detain you but a second, darling. (*JONES hears the voice and slips out.*) And—old Carl! Delightful! (*She grasps his hand—turns her head toward MRS. JONES.*) I see you have my Mary here.

MRS. JONES. (*Dazed and embarrassed, does not sense the situation, but JONES is bristling with joy. He adjusts himself to watch the encounter.*) What, dear?

MRS. KEENE. (*Nodding plumes complacently*) Yes. The maid who left me.

MRS. JONES. Oh!

MRS. KEENE. And so we can settle that case

right off. (*Before MRS. JONES has gripped herself together, MRS. KEENE has hustled to the center door and beckons to the distant MARY.*) One moment, Mary, please. (*JONES smothers a chuckle. MRS. JONES's glare wilts him.*) It will make us all so happy. (*Enter MARY, set, grim face. MRS. KEENE bubbles with energy. MRS. JONES is waxing angry.*) Mary, if I pay the money that you feel is coming to you for wages—in arrears, will you act as a guard where we are holding a Congressional rally to-night? (*MRS. KEENE has MRS. JONES on her right, Mr. JONES on her left, MARY is slightly back in the group. She sniffs, folds her arms indifferently. MRS. KEENE, all aglow, beams on MRS. JONES.*) We are planning a diplomatic demonstration of protest, darling. It's time the country realized the steering gear on the Ship of State is slued all to one side! Will you, Mary?

MARY. (*Hesitates at first*) I can't make much of a ballast wheel meself, ma'am. Much obliged.

MRS. KEENE. (*Suavely*) But if I doubled those wages, Mary?

MRS. JONES. (*Aroused, explodes*) Bribery, Mrs. Keene!

MRS. KEENE. (*Toying with fat-looking, stunning bag*) Now, now, my dear, let me handle this case. Well, Mary?

MARY. (*Wreathed in smiles*) I've always maintained you wuz no fool of a woman, yourself, ma'am. Well, all right!

MRS. KEENE. (*Hands her money*) None of your compliments, my girl! There. And no hard feelings between us.

MARY. Whisht, ma'am. I'll jump at helpin' you, any time. Much obliged.

MRS. KEENE. The Congressional rally headquarters, Mary. To-night.



MARY. (*Blithely*) Sure, ma'am, I'll be there.
(*Exits, counting money. JONES chuckles.*)

MRS. KEENE. (*Preening herself, appeals to both triumphantly*) There! That shows what a little open diplomacy can do! Bribery? An old-fashioned method, my child. I am not a lawyer, but at least I was clever enough to settle that little dispute with no great difficulty. (*Sweeps across to JONES, hand extended.*) Congratulate me!

JONES. (*Cordially*) Bully!

MRS. KEENE. (*She dimples, flounces across to dear ALICE, smile and hand going before her*) And from you—it will be a real compliment, Alice!

MRS. JONES. (*Calmly*) My fee, if you please. One hundred dollars——

MRS. KEENE. (*Jumps as if her hand scorched*) What?

MRS. JONES. (*Undisturbed*) You retained my services as counsel for this case—now I demand my fee.

MRS. KEENE. (*Shocked, horrified beyond belief. Hurls her words at her friend*) The very idea! Why, Alice Jones! I merely talked over the telephone to you. (*Advances, wagging her finger.*) You can't deny that. Just a friendly, happy conversation.

MRS. JONES. You asked me to accept this case, Mrs. Keene, and I did.

MRS. KEENE. But I entered into no contract with you.

MRS. JONES. Verbal consent is a contract.

MRS. KEENE. (*Hysterically*) But—I didn't know that. How could I know it? Anybody will tell you I was ignorant of those facts.

MRS. JONES. Ignorance of the law excuses no one.

MRS. KEENE. (*Stamps foot*) But I settled this case myself.

MRS. JONES. You cannot.

MRS. KEENE. But you poor soul, I *did*—I was standing right there——

MRS. JONES. If the case is settled out of court, you have saved the expenses of the court.

MRS. KEENE. (*Triumphantly*) There! You admit it!

MRS. JONES. *But*—as your attorney, I still demand my fee.

MRS. KEENE. Well, of all the nerve——! I won't listen to such nonsense.

MRS. JONES. (*Lightly*) Then—revoke the case.

MRS. KEENE. (*Jumps at it blithely*) All right! I revoke the case—whatever that is.

MRS. JONES. (*Quietly*) That makes you liable in damages for all expenses connected with it.

(MRS. KEENE *is staggered. She rallies almost instantly and appeals to* MR. JONES.)

MRS. KEENE. Heavens! Who—surely, Mr. Jones, this isn't at all fair. (*Suddenly loses her temper, stamps.*) I demand, sir, that you speak to your wife!

MRS. JONES. (*Flash~~es~~ back*) That is irregular. Any appeal must be made to the court.

MRS. KEENE. (*Deaf to her, speaks pathetically*) You are an admirable lawyer. The truth is, had I seriously wanted the case taken up I should have consulted a *man*. He has a profound understanding of law. (*Barks at ALICE.*) *And of women!* (*Pleads to JONES again.*) It is your opinion I want, Carlton.

JONES. (*Reluctantly*) Your—counsel is right, Mrs. Keene. An appeal must be made to the court. That is the law. (MRS. JONES *gasps. Looks toward him. Her manner has undergone a bright change.*)

MRS. KEENE. (*At bay—is defiant and angry*)

The law! The law! What do either of you know about the law? Just because I was smart enough to settle this case myself, you are both jealous of me. There you stand, inventing all sorts of schemes to swallow up some of my money.

JONES. Not at all, Mrs. Keene. The point is, I must uphold my—er—brother attorney.

MRS. KEENE. Brother *fiddlesticks!*

JONES. If you are not satisfied, by filing a bond you can carry your case to court. I'll take your bond.

MRS. KEENE. Oh, no, you won't. I'll take my bond myself—I'll file it myself—and go to court with the case myself. I'll not be the cat's-paw for either of you! (*Starts away in righteous wrath.*) *Robbers!* (*She is gone. Her plumes waving indignantly.*)

MRS. JONES. (*Dropping down on fireside seat*) And so endeth my first case!

JONES. (*Standing over her proudly*) You can't mean to drop it!

MRS. JONES. Of course! Poor dear Polly. (*Looks up at him whimsically*) The blessed woman gave me the chance I wanted to show off before you.

JONES. (*Beaming*) George! I never saw your real self before. But I'm proud of you!

MRS. JONES. (*Briefly*) Don't mock me.

JONES. (*With convincing spirit*) I'm sincere. Never more so in my life. Why, you'll make a howling success of the law.

MRS. JONES. (*Demurely*) You are laughing at me now. You know I am not going to practice.

JONES. (*Decidedly*) Yes, you are! That's decided! (*Straddles on the rug, tilts his head and admires his wife.*) It's queer how you've picked up my very manner!

MRS. JONES. (*Jumps*) What? (*Laughs.*) Oh, Carlton, what a boy you are!

JONES. (*Honest conviction*) It's from being so close together in everything. That's it.

MRS. JONES. (*Relishing it*) You dumbfound me! When will you take me for your clerk?

JONES. (*Emphatically*) Clerk, nothing! My partner, madam. (*Bows over her hand.*)

MRS. JONES. (*Eyes dancing with mischief*) General, Limited, or Joint partnership, sir!

JONES. (*Grins*) Joint—you Shylock.

MRS. JONES. (*Glistening eyes*) Carlton! Your partner! "Jones and Jones, Attorneys-at-Law."

JONES. (*Giving over grandly*) Yes. I'll order the new shingle to-morrow.

MRS. JONES. (*Neatly*) Shall I rehearse receiving it? How is this. On my knees, Carlton? (*She seems about to sweep in her deep curtsey to the floor, there to remain with bent head.*)

JONES. (*The tone she loves to hear in his voice*) Never there, dear heart. Always here—in my arms. (*He holds her close to his heart. There is a merry but happy look in her eyes as she glances into his. It would annoy them both if we watched their heads drawing closer together.*)

THE END

THE REJUVENATION OF AUNT MARY.

The famous comedy in three acts, by Anne Warner. 7 males, 6 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

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A comedy in four acts, by Marie Doran, author of "Tempest and Sunshine," etc. Characters, 4 males, 7 females, though any number of boys and girls can be introduced in the action of the play. One interior and one exterior scene, but can be easily played in one interior scene. Costumes modern. Time, about 2 hours.

The theme of this play is the coming of a new student to the college, her reception by the scholars, her trials and final triumph.

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A comedy in 3 acts, by F. Tennison Jesse and H. Harwood. 4 males, 5 females. One easy interior scene. A charming comedy, constructed with uncommon skill, and abounds with clever lines. Margaret Anglin's big success. Amateurs will find this comedy easy to produce and popular with all audiences. Price, 60 Cents.

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A comedy in 3 acts. By James Montgomery. 5 males, 6 females. Costumes, modern. Two interior scenes. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Is it possible to tell the absolute truth—even for twenty-four hours? It is—at least Bob Bennett, the hero of "Nothing But the Truth," accomplished the feat. The bet he made with his business partners, and the trouble he got into—with his partners, his friends, and his fiancée—this is the subject of William Collier's tremendous comedy hit. "Nothing But the Truth" can be whole-heartedly recommended as one of the most sprightly, amusing and popular comedies that this country can boast. Price, 60 Cents.

IN WALKED JIMMY.

A comedy in 4 acts, by Minnie Z. Jaffa. 10 males, 2 females (although any number of males and females may be used as clerks, etc.). Two interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The thing into which Jimmy walked was a broken-down shoe factory, when the clerks had all been fired, and when the proprietor was in serious contemplation of suicide.

Jimmy, nothing else but plain Jimmy, would have been a mysterious figure had it not been for his matter-of-fact manner, his smile and his everlasting humanness. He put the shoe business on its feet, won the heart of the girl clerk, saved her erring brother from jail, escaped that place as a permanent boarding house himself, and foiled the villain.

Clean, wholesome comedy with just a touch of human nature, just a dash of excitement and more than a little bit of true philosophy make "In Walked Jimmy" one of the most delightful of plays. Jimmy is full of the religion of life, the religion of happiness and the religion of helpfulness, and he so permeates the atmosphere with his "religion" that everyone is happy. The spirit of optimism, good cheer, and hearty laughter dominates the play. There is not a dull moment in any of the four acts. We strongly recommend it.

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MARTHA BY-THE-DAY.

An optimistic comedy in three acts, by Julie M. Lippmann, author of the "Martha" stories. 5 males, 5 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

It is altogether a gentle thing, this play. It is full of quaint humor, old-fashioned, homely sentiment, the kind that people who see the play will recall and chuckle over to-morrow and the next day.

Miss Lippmann has herself adapted her very successful book for stage service, and in doing this has selected from her novel the most telling incidents, infectious comedy and homely sentiment for the play, and the result is thoroughly delightful. Price, 60 Cents.

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Golden Days

A comedy of youth, in four acts, by Sidney Toler and Marion Short. 7 males, 10 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

"Golden Days" is a play with all the charm of youth. It enjoyed a run of sixteen weeks in Chicago with Patricia Collinge in the leading role, and was then brought to the Gaiety Theatre, New York, with Helen Hayes in the part of "Mary Anne." Price, 75 cents.

Come Out of the Kitchen

A charming comedy in 3 acts, adapted by A. E. Thomas from the story of the same name by Alice Duer Miller. 6 males, 5 females. Three interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

"Come Out of the Kitchen," with Ruth Chatterton in the leading role, made a notable success on its production by Henry Miller at the Cohan Theatre, New York. It was also a great success at the Strand Theatre, London. A most ingenious and entertaining comedy, and we strongly recommend it for amateur production.

Price, 75 cents

His Majesty Bunker Bean

A farcical comedy in four acts. By Lee Wilton Dodd, from the novel by Harry Leon Wilson. 12 males, 6 females. Four interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Those who have laughed immoderately at Harry Leon Wilson's story will be greatly amused by the play, which tells the story of a cowed and credulous youth who became kingly when he was tricked into believing himself a reincarnation of Napoleon. "His Majesty Bunker Bean," with Taylor Holmes in the title role, was brought to the Astor Theatre, New York, after a run of 25 weeks in Chicago. A delightful and wholesome farce comedy with no dull moments.

Price, 75 cents

A Full House

A farcical comedy in three acts. By Fred Jackson. 7 males, 7 females. One interior scene. Modern costumes. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. This newest and funniest of all farces was written by Fred Jackson, the well-known short story writer, and is backed up by the prestige of an impressive New York success and the promise of unlimited fun presented in the most attractive form. A cleverer farce has not been seen for many a long day. "A Full House" is a house full of laughs.

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Clarence

A comedy in four acts by Booth Tarkington. of "The Man From Home," "Penrod," "The Country Cousin," etc. 5 males, 5 females. Two interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Clarence has no medals, no shoulders bars, no great accomplishment. One of the "five million," he served where he was sent—though it was no further than Texas. As an entomologist he found—on this side of the ocean—no field for his specialty in the great war. So they set him to driving mules.

Now, reduced to civil life and seeking a job, he finds a position in the home of one, Wheeler, a wealthy Engelwood man with a family. And because he'd "been in the army" he becomes guide, philosopher and friend to the members of that same agitated and distracted family group. Clarence's position is an anomalous one. He mends the bathroom plumbing, he tunes the piano, he types—off stage—he plays the saxophone. And around him revolves such a group of characters as only Booth Tarkington could offer. It is a real American comedy; and the audience ripples with appreciative and delighted laughter.

Those marvelous young people, Cora and Bobby Wheeler, are portrait sketches warranted to appeal to every one but the originals. Their truth will be lost on the "Flapper" and the "prep" school youth, but to their parents and guardians, to all, indeed, who have emerged from the serious, self-conscious, period of adolescence, they will be an enduring joy.

"Clarence" is a real delight. It is as American as "Huckleberry Finn" or pumpkin pie. It is as delightful as any native comedy which has tried to lure the laughter of this country in the last ten seasons.

Price, 75 cents.

Three Live Ghosts

A comedy in three acts by Frederick Isham and Max Marcin. 6 males, 4 females (2 policemen). One interior scene stands throughout the three acts. Costumes, modern. Plays $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

"Three Live Ghosts" is brim full of fun and humor and is sure to keep audiences in gales of laughter. The New York critics described it as the most ingenious and amusing comedy of the season and genuinely and heartily funny. It played a full season in New York and then toured the big cities. A lively comedy of merit we can strongly recommend for amateur production.

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